IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions. Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~A method for amplification of a target RNA sequence comprising the following steps:

(a) annealing a first primer to the target RNA sequence, said first primer comprising:

a first hybridizing sequence ~~and~~, comprising 7-14 nucleotides, which is complementary to at least a first segment of the target RNA sequence;

a transcription enhancing sequence that comprises a promoter sequence~~, wherein the promoter sequence~~ that is operatively associated with the first hybridizing sequence; and ~~the first hybridizing sequence is complementary to and hybridizes to at least a first segment of the target RNA sequence~~

a first oligonucleotide anchor that binds to a second segment of the target RNA sequence,

wherein the transcription enhancing sequence forms a loop between the first oligonucleotide anchor and the first hybridizing sequence upon annealing of said first primer to the target RNA sequence;

(b) extending said first primer in a reaction catalyzed by a DNA polymerase, forming a first RNA/cDNA hybrid nucleic acid molecule;

(c) ~~selectively~~ removing the target RNA sequence of the first RNA/cDNA hybrid nucleic acid molecule ~~forming~~ to obtain a first single stranded cDNA sequence;

(d) annealing a second primer to the ~~obtained~~ first single stranded cDNA sequence, said second primer comprising an amplification enhancing sequence having no promoter sequence and a second hybridizing sequence which is complementary to ~~and hybridizes to~~ a first segment of the first single stranded cDNA sequence;

(e) extending said second primer in a reaction catalyzed by a DNA polymerase to form a first double stranded DNA molecule; and

(f) amplifying ~~employing~~ the first double stranded DNA molecule of step (e) ~~in the preparation of~~ using a DNA-dependent RNA polymerase with specificity for said promoter sequence of said first primer to produce a plurality of RNA transcripts that are complementary to the target RNA sequence ~~in a reaction catalyzed by a DNA-dependent RNA polymerase with specificity for the promoter sequence comprised in said first primer,~~

~~wherein said first primer comprises a first hybridizing sequence of 7 to 14 nucleotides, a transcription enhancing sequence comprising said promoter sequence, and a first oligonucleotide anchor that binds to a second segment of the target RNA sequence, whereby the transcription enhancing sequence creates a loop between the first oligonucleotide anchor and the first hybridizing sequence upon annealing of said first primer to the target RNA sequence and/or wherein said second primer comprises a second hybridizing sequence of 7 to 14 nucleotides, an amplification enhancing sequence comprising no promoter sequence and a second oligonucleotide anchor that binds to a second segment of the first single stranded cDNA, whereby the amplification enhancing sequence creates a loop between the second oligonucleotide anchor and the second hybridizing sequence upon annealing of said second primer to the first single stranded cDNA sequence~~.

2. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

(g) annealing said second primer to the RNA transcripts produced in step (f);

(h) extending said second primer in a reaction catalyzed by the DNA polymerase to form a second RNA/cDNA hybrid nucleic acid molecule;

(i) ~~selectively~~ removing the RNA of the second RNA/cDNA hybrid molecule to obtain a second single stranded cDNA molecule;

(j) annealing said first primer to the ~~obtained~~ second single stranded cDNA sequence;

(k) extending the 3' end of the second single stranded cDNA molecule in a reaction catalyzed by the DNA polymerase using said first primer as a template to form a second partly double stranded DNA molecule comprising a double stranded promoter site; and

(l) ~~employing~~ amplifying the second double stranded DNA molecule of step (k) using said DNA-dependent RNA polymerase with specificity for the promoter sequence of the first primer ~~in the preparation of~~to produce a plurality of RNA transcripts complementary to the target RNA sequence ~~in a reaction catalyzed by the DNA-dependent RNA polymerase with specificity for the promoter sequence in the first primer~~.

3. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein said first primer comprises, from the 5' end to the 3' end, a first oligonucleotide anchor, a transcription enhancing sequence comprising said promoter, and a first hybridizing sequence of 7 to 14 nucleotides which are

complementary to a first segment of the target RNA sequence of 7 to 14 contiguous nucleotides.

4. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein said second primer comprises, from the 5' end to the 3' end, a second oligonucleotide anchor, an amplification enhancing sequence comprising no promoter, and a second hybridizing sequence of 7 to 14 nucleotides which are complementary to a first segment of the first single stranded cDNA sequence of 7[[-]]to 14 contiguous nucleotides.

5. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the first hybridizing sequence of said first primer comprises 7[[-]]to 10 nucleotides which are complementary to a first segment of the target RNA sequence of 7 to 10 contiguous nucleotides.

6. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the first oligonucleotide anchor of said first primer comprises 7 to 22 nucleotides which bind to a second segment of the target RNA sequence.

7. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 6, wherein the first oligonucleotide anchor comprises 7 to 14~~, preferably 9-14,~~ nucleotides.

8. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the first oligonucleotide anchor comprises DNA, RNA or modified nucleotides.

9. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the first oligonucleotide anchor comprises PNA.

10. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein said second oligonucleotide anchor of said second primer comprises 7 to 22 nucleotides which bind to a second segment of the first single stranded cDNA molecule.

11. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 10, wherein the second oligonucleotide anchor comprises 7 to 14~~, preferably 9-14,~~ nucleotides.

12. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the number of nucleotides separating the second segment ~~is separated~~ from the first segment [[by]]is selected from the group consisting of: 0 to 6 nucleotides, ~~preferably by~~ 0 to 4 nucleotides, ~~more preferably by~~and 0 to 3 nucleotides.

13. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the transcription enhancing sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:39.

14. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the amplification enhancing sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:40.

15. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the promoter sequence is the bacteriophage T7 promoter sequence.

16. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the DNA polymerase is the avian myeloblastosis virus (AMV) reverse transcriptase.

17. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the target RNA sequence is a segment of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

18. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the target nucleic acid is a segment of the human hepatitis C virus.

19. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the RNA transcripts are detected by one or more sequence-specific probes.

20. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 19, wherein the sequence-specific probe hybridizes to a sequence identical to the amplification sequence of said second primer.

21-33. (Canceled).

34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the modified nucleotides comprise 2'O-methyl modified nucleotides and/or LNA.

35. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 11, wherein the second oligonucleotide anchor comprises DNA, RNA or modified nucleotides.

36. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 35, wherein the modified nucleotides comprise 2'O-methyl modified nucleotides and/or LNA.

37. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the second oligonucleotide anchor comprises PNA.

38. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~The method of claim 1, wherein the second hybridizing sequence of said second primer comprises 7[[-]]to 10 nucleotides which are complementary to a first segment of the first single stranded cDNA sequence of 7 to 10 contiguous nucleotides.

39. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the second primer further comprises:

a second oligonucleotide anchor that binds to a second segment of the first single stranded cDNA; and

said second hybridizing sequence comprising 7-14 nucleotides which are complementary to a first segment of the first single stranded cDNA sequence,

further wherein the amplification enhancing sequence forms a loop between the second oligonucleotide anchor and the second hybridizing sequence upon annealing of said second primer to the first single stranded cDNA sequence.

40. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein the first oligonucleotide anchor comprises 9-14 nucleotides.

41. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the second oligonucleotide anchor comprises 9-14 nucleotides.